

## **JB Interview**

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research interview. As I told you during our call last week, we will be discussing the role of digital skills in the integration of Eritrean refugees in the Netherlands. Is it alright if we begin?

JB: Yes, I'm happy to share my experiences and insights.

Interviewer: Okay thank you! Let's start with the types of digital devices you are familiar with and how often you use them.

JB: I have and I am familiar with a smartphone and laptop. I use my smartphone most frequently, the whole day. I also use my laptop on a regular basis, especially for work-related tasks and accessing online resources.

Interviewer: Now, let's discuss the features, software, or applications you use on your mobile phone and laptop. Could you tell me more about that?

JB: Yes. On my mobile phone, I use it for making direct phone calls to my family and friends, which helps me stay connected with them. I also use social media apps like WhatsApp, Telegram, Messenger, and IMO to communicate and share updates with people in my community. In addition, I

utilize DigID and banking apps, for managing my finances and accessing important services. On my laptop, I often use it for sending and receiving emails, participating in video conferencing platforms, and creating documents using word processing software.

Interviewer: Now, let's move on to the topic of integration and digital skills. How has the integration process been for you so far?

JB: The integration process has been a bit challenging for me personally, but it has also provided me with opportunities for growth. I've been learning the Dutch language and trying to understand and adapt to the Dutch culture. It takes time, but I believe I am making progress.

Interviewer: In your own words, what does integration mean to you?

JB: Integration to me, it means finding a sense of belonging and being able to participate fully in the Dutch society. It involves not only learning the Dutch language and culture but also having equal rights.

Interviewer: Now, let's focus on digital technologies. How do you use digital technologies in your everyday life?

JB: I use them for various things such as communication, accessing information, and learning. They have become essential tools for staying

connected with my community, searching for information, and even seeking jobs.

Interviewer: Have digital skills played a role in your integration process? If so, could you elaborate on how?

JB: Yes, I believe so. Digital skills have played a huge role in my integration process. They have allowed me to communicate with other people, this in turn helps me build social connections. In addition to that, digital skills have assisted me in accessing information about job opportunities, and educational resources.

Interviewer: That's nice. Now, let's discuss the impact of digital technologies on your integration into Dutch society. Do you feel that digital technologies have helped or hindered your integration? Can you provide specific examples?

JB: Generally, I think digital technologies have been helpful in my integration process. For example, applications for language learning and online courses have helped me learning Dutch. In addition, digital technologies and digital skills have allowed me to connect with different organizations and access information about services for refugees. This being said, there also have been some challenges too. For example at times, language barrier have created obstacles in accessing information.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing those experiences. How do you currently use digital technologies to access information about your rights and obligations as a refugee in the Netherlands?

JB: I mainly use digital platforms by government agencies and organizations that work in assisting refugees. I go to official government websites to look for information about legal rights, and obligations. Moreover, I use online materials offered by NGOs and organizations that provide support regarding the Dutch legal system and understanding rights and responsibilities as a refugee.

Interviewer: Have you encountered any challenges using digital technologies in the Netherlands, such as language barriers or lack of access to technology? How have you overcome these challenges, if at all?

JB: Yes, I have faced some challenges using digital technologies since I came here. Language barrier sometimes make it hard to understand certain digital applications even if you have the skill to use them. In addition to that, access to the materials themselves, especially for the people with low income can be a challenge.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that. In your opinion, how do you think digital skills and access to technology could be improved for refugees in the Netherlands?

JB: I think there are many ways digital skills and access to resources can be made better for refugees and new comers. First, providing robust digital skills training programs. But the trainings should be prepared by first understanding the specific needs of the refugees. Because different people have different needs. These programs can cover different of topics, like basic computer training, digital communication, and online navigation. In addition to that, ensuring equal access to digital tools can help address the issue of access disparities. Moreover, a multilingual support system and user-friendly digital interfaces can help refugees with language barriers.

Interviewer: Thank you. Let's now move on to the topic of digital skills and social connections. Do you use any online platforms or apps to connect with other refugees or people from your home country? How has this affected your sense of community and belonging in the Netherlands?

JB: Yes, I use online platforms and apps to connect with other refugees like myself and people from my country. There are social media groups, and messaging apps where we share information and support one another. These helped to build a sense of community and belonging. They provide

ways to connect with people with similar experiences and issues, and it helps to minimize feelings of isolation.

Interviewer: Great, have you had the opportunity to interact with Dutch people or participate in Dutch social events?

JB: Yes, in few instances. I have been able to interact with Dutch people through language practice programs and volunteering work.

Interviewer: Have you used any digital tools or platforms to connect with Dutch people or participate in Dutch social events?

JB: Yes, the above events I found them on Facebook. Social media apps have been helpful in discovering local events and connecting with Dutch people with similar interests.

Interviewer: Let's talk about digital skills and employment. Have you been able to find employment since arriving in the Netherlands? If not, what are the challenges you face in finding a job?

JB: I have faced problems in finding employment in the Netherlands. Language barrier and difficulty in understanding the country's job market are main challenges for me. In addition, my previous education (I have a BA degree in Electrical engineering as I told you earlier) is not recognized here.

Interviewer: Have you used any online platforms or resources to search for job opportunities?

JB: Yes, I have used online platforms and websites to search for jobs. But I am forced to work in a totally unrelated area. I am an engineer but it is difficult to find a job with my degree here.

Interviewer: Have you received any support or training to develop digital skills related to job search or job performance?

JB: Yes, I have attended few workshops and events on using digital platforms for job searching, creating professional profiles, and CV.

Interviewer: Let's move on to the topic of access to basic services. Have you faced any challenges in accessing basic services such as healthcare, education, or housing in the Netherlands?

JB: Yes, again it is the language barrier at the top of my head. Also the unfamiliarity with how everything works in this country has also been a challenge for accessing these services. Additionally, limited knowledge of available resources and the eligibility criteria for certain services can create challenges.

Interviewer: Have you used any digital tools or resources to help you navigate the Dutch system and access these services?

JB: Yes, for me digital applications and the internet have been helpful in navigating the Dutch system and accessing services. Online government services, official websites, and information sharing tools provide me useful information about the available services, the eligibility requirements, and how to access them. I use these technologies particularly for my contact with the government, healthcare, education and housing.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that. In your opinion, do you feel that digital skills are important in accessing basic services in the Netherlands?

JB: Absolutely. Digital skills are crucial for accessing almost all services in the Netherlands. Things are moving online, and having the digital skills allows people to use these resources. From making appointments with a doctor, paying bills, finding a job, buying things literally everything is online.

Interviewer: Let's move on to the topic of digital skills training. Have you had any opportunities to attend digital skills training programs or workshops in the Netherlands? If so, could you describe your experience and how it has benefited you?



JB: Yes, I have had the opportunity to attend digital skills training programs and workshops as I mentioned earlier as well. For me my interest was on digital skills especially job related ones. It has been a good experience as it has helped me in activities such as job searching, communication, and accessing information.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that. What are some of the main challenges you have faced in accessing digital skills training or educational resources in the Netherlands?

JB: One of the main challenges I have faced in accessing digital skills training is the availability of such programs in the first place. While there are some organizations that offer digital skills training, the range of topics covered by different organizations are pretty much the same. Language barriers again is a challenge for many people, especially as they are conducted in Dutch. For many people even trainings in English can be difficult. Additionally, lack of awareness about the available trainings is also a challenge in accessing digital skills training.

Interviewer: Are there any specific digital skills or areas of knowledge that you feel would be particularly valuable for your integration into Dutch society? Why?

JB: One particularly digital skill that I think is important for my integration into Dutch society is advanced and interactive language learning platforms. These can provide opportunities for language practice, and can help me improve my Dutch language. Additionally, knowledge of digital platforms about entrepreneurship and business can be beneficial.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing your perspective. Finally, what kind of support or resources do you think would be beneficial in helping refugees like yourself in the Netherlands improve their digital skills and enhance their integration?

JB: I believe providing accessible and all round trainings specifically designed for refugees would be highly important. These programs should consider the language difficulties refugees have, differences in educational backgrounds. In addition, ensuring equal access to technology and internet would be fundamental.

Interviewer: We are now concluding this interview. Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your experience with digital skills and integration?

JB: I would like to note that digital skills and access to modern day technology have the potential to improve the integration process for refugees. It is important for the government and other organizations to recognize the significance of providing support in this area.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing your experience and thank you for your time.

JB: You're welcome. I'm glad to be part of this. Thank you for doing this very important research.